



TAIN ROYAL ACADEMY

ACADAMAIDH RÌOGHAIL BHAILE DHUBHTHAICH



Parents' Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 2

Cuairtlitir

November 2009
An t-Samhainn 2009

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RECTOR'S COMMENT

As we move rapidly through this term, it is really important that all our pupils focus on their learning in every subject. The homework club runs in the school library from 1.30pm till the end of lunchtime. The S4 Prelims start very soon and helpful study advice has been given at assemblies and is on the flat screen information screens in school. We were pleased with the improvement in pupil attainment in this year's SQA examinations and as staff work hard on behalf of pupils throughout the year it is important that every pupil takes advantage of what the school offers.

At the start of session every pupil is issued with their own individual Pupil Planner. This is not just a homework diary. It is designed for pupils to enter the key learning objectives for each lesson each day. They can then colour code each lesson depending on their understanding and can use this to help revision. It can also be a very useful way for parents and carers to discuss learning each day with their child at home.

As always we hope to be able to support you as you help your child learn. If there are other ways we can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to contact myself, one of the deputies or your child's guidance teacher.

Donnie Macleod, Rector

SPONSORED EVENTS - RECORD TOTAL

We are currently collecting the last contributions of sponsorship for this year's Sponsored Walk and Sponsored Read-in. The total stands at **£7,832.76**. We are hopeful that the final total for sponsorship could touch £8,000.

All funds raised go towards "extras" provided for pupils in TRA and we are extremely grateful for the support of parents and friends of the Academy. We have also been delighted at the willingness shown by pupils to collect as much as they can.

The day itself was a great success and we would like to thank all those who have supported us financially.

A Gray, Depute Rector

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk - The Parentzone website provides information on supporting your child's learning, examples of parental involvement, parent councils and information on education in Scotland. When parents are involved in their children's education, children do better. Find out how you can get involved.

TRA PARENT COUNCIL

The Annual General Meeting of Tain Royal Academy Parent Council was held at the Academy in September. The office bearers for the coming session, 2009/10 were appointed.

In the Chair remains Paul Hoggarth with Caroline Hurren as Vice Chair. Treasurer is again Nikki Beesley and the Clerk taking the minutes for a further year is Alison Agnew. Two new parent councillors joined the existing eighteen to make the maximum number of twenty allowed under the constitution. The other ten places are taken by co-opted members from the staff, school captains and local Highland Councillors bringing the Parent Council up to a full strength membership of thirty.

In light of the recent problems experienced during the work on the replacement roof for the two storey block, property matters dominated the rest of the meeting. The Parent Council, through its chair, had approached the Director of Education at Highland Council to express concern about the amount of work still outstanding at TRA and suggesting that there is a requirement for a new school building altogether rather than the Academy suffer a long and disruptive repair programme. The Director agreed to meet the TRA Parent Council at its November meeting to discuss the issue further.

The chair and vice chair met with the three local Highland Councillors some days after the Parent Council meeting to seek their support on property matters at TRA.

The September Parent Council meeting heard from Rector, Donnie Macleod, of progress in SQA examination results and of the success of the royal visit from Princess Anne. He also reported on the tightening of budgets and the possible changes this could mean in the future operation of the Academy.

The School Captains were asked by the Parent Council to consult with the Academy Pupil Council in order to bring some suggestions to the next meeting for a way of marking the bi-centenary of the school. They were given a budget and hints that it was not to be exceeded !!!!

Paul Hoggarth, TRA Parent Council

ST DUTHUS AND TRA MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

At the end of last term, S3 Hospitality held a coffee morning for staff in support of Macmillan Cancer Support. We made muffins of various flavours - apple, chocolate, yoghurt and raisin and blueberries. There was tea and coffee and juice for the pupils who helped. The classes helped design the lovely tables the staff sat at but unfortunately there was no music provided this year. The pupils served the tea and coffee. Also, in the foyer some pupils sold cakes to the pupils. The money raised was **£110.69**. Thanks for the support the staff gave us.

Ross Munro, 3B



HALLOWEEN DISCO

A very successful Halloween Disco was held on 7th October. All pupils made a great effort to dress up and there were many fantastic costumes.

We also raised money for the school fund with the selling of juice and bacon rolls. Thank you to Miss Harpham for organising this. Behaviour was of an excellent standard as always!

Dr Ross



GÀIDHLIG NEWS

Annual BT Alba Debate

Aimee MacDonald and Elspeth Hayes took part in the 10th Annual BT Alba Debate in Stornoway in November. There were twenty secondary teams from throughout Scotland. Aimee and Elspeth were the youngest competitors to take part.

They won their first heat against a very able 5th year team from Gairloch High School arguing against the motion that pupils should take parenting classes. The pupils put up a very good competition but were beaten in the second round by two 5th year pupils from Portree High School, arguing against the motion that communities like Facebook and Twitter are better than any local community.

This is a very formal competition held at An Lanntair Arts Centre. Not all of the pupils managed to deal with the pressure but Aimee and Elspeth excelled.

On our first morning Alasdair Morrison, former labour MP for the Outer Isles, drove us across Lewis to visit the Shawbost Woollen Mill where we saw the whole process of making Harris tweed. We had a bit of an argument about wind farms but he didn't realise who he was arguing with!

There were various workshops in voice, drama and dancing and the event ended with a super ceilidh where pupils preformed, sang and danced. The ceilidh went on till late and friendships were struck up and connection formed.

I would like to rejoice in all the hard work that Aimee and Elspeth put in with support from S2 Gaidhlig.

Ri Chèile

Sophie MacLeod and Katie Bremner travelled to Derry on the 7th of October to take part in Ri Chèile, a festival organised by Comann na Gaidhlig and Gael Linn. Ri Chèile means "together" and its aim is to foster links between young people from Scotland, Northern and Southern Ireland and to

give them the opportunity to explore similarities between the Gaelic languages.

About 30 pupils gave speeches on subjects of their own choice. Katie spoke on *Women in Engineering* and Sophie spoke about *Alcohol and the effect it has on young people*.

Our itinerary included a mini Gaidhlig/Gaeilge class, a bi-lingual quiz, a walking tour of Derry and it's historic walls and a trip to the Giant's Causeway where we listened to an ancient tale about the Giant Finn MacCoul.

The trip concluded with a ceilidh.

FILM G

S1 and S2 Gaidhlig wrote, produced, acted, filmed and edited a short film on the subject of the HERO. Florrie from Sabhal Mor Ostaig and the renowned writer Catriona Lexie Campbell came to visit for two days to facilitate the work. The film will be entered for the annual Film G competition this month.



Pupils who come to the school canteen without a Smartcard or money must wait at the end of the serving queue.



CONGRATULATIONS
to Kim Best
on gaining her Silver
Duke of Edinburgh's Award

RUGBY - NEW SPONSORED STRIPS

This year the senior boys rugby team have been lucky to acquire a sponsor for their strips. Harry Gows, the Highland Bakers gratefully donated two thirds of the cost of a new set of strips to the rugby team. For the final third, the boys carried out a sponsored row.



The boys in two teams of eight attempted to row the English Channel and back covering a distance of around 54000m. The two teams were split into backs versus forwards. It was a close fought race but the forwards secured a victory in the end. I think the backs hit a patch of sea weed! The boys managed to raise a total of £450. I would like to say a big thank you to Harry Gows for the sponsorship and the great effort from the boys to raise the money for the new strips.

T Magowan, PE Department

Tain Royal Academy v Millburn Academy

*"Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here, obedient to their laws, we lie"
- Steven Pressfield, in Gates of Fire*

This match will no doubt go down in Tain Royal Academy folklore. On a cold Wednesday afternoon in November a small party of boys left TRA. In fact, only thirteen with one member to meet on route. They left as boys and returned as men.

There comes a time in every coach's career when they make prediction or they lack faith in those in their charge and for one rugby coach it was this day. He would live to rue his doubt in his team as Burger King can testify.

Millburn won the toss and elected to kick. It was an ominous start, with a dropped catch from the kick off. This will no doubt be put down to the glare from the floodlights. Things went from bad to worse with several missed tackles resulting in a weakly conceded Millburn try under the posts.

Tain were not disheartened with some manful leadership from their dynamic captain Ben Parkes they re-jigged the back line, moving

Alasdair Mackintosh to full back; a player whose defensive capabilities and attacking flair would be called upon more than once in the game.

However, despite this reorganisation, Millburn scored again all too quickly cutting through the Tain defence like a knife through warm butter. Despite this catastrophe the captain rallied the men under the posts and inspired them to keep their heads high, to keep their resolve and NEVER surrender.

Unfortunately, yet again, Millburn using energetic forward and back playing scored, yet this time the gods of rugby shone kindly upon Tain and Millburn failed to convert.

At the turnaround Tain went in 0-17 down yet vigorous runs from Lachlan James and Rory Cunningham had started to show what this team was all about.

The phrase 'a game of two halves' is often used too frequently yet what was about to befall Millburn was an unparalleled triumph compared to

the first half nightmare. Words often fail to materialise into actions yet on this day bovine enticement led to the comeback of the decade.

Straight from the kick-off TRA smashed into their opposing numbers. Yardage was made by sumo style running from Alasdair, it was then shipped out through the back to Ben Parkes coming onto the ball with the pace of a rather quick gazelle. He squeezed passed would be tacklers and ran round the post to score. This was dually converted by Alasdair Mackintosh.

Was this to be a consolation try or something much bigger? Bigger, it was the only answer. Next speedsters Sam Macarthur and Mathew Kitchen combined to bring Tain within metres of the line. What they needed was a battering ram, what they got was new signing Darren Custerson. Like a golden beam of light (floodlights shining off his hair) he cut through grasping Millburn defence from metres (some say as many as 5m out) and put the ball down to

unanimous applause from the assembled crowd (as many as five spectators!) This may well have been the most popular try of the evening but it was not converted.

Now it was the turn of the forwards to get on the score sheet, for scarcely had another 8 minutes gone and Gordie Mackay was over the line after a lung busting 20 meter run breaking through tackle after tackle, selling dummy after dummy and diving across the line. This try however was converted.

Millburn had lost the advantage as the scores now stood at 19-17. Could Tain hold on? Could Millburn fight back? The answer was emphatically answered by one man ... Sam Brennan. Now rugby is a team game but this one man answered the teams need for pace. He firstly finished off a well worked backs move involving quick hands and many

dazzling angles of running and cruised over the line like a white Vauxhall Nova. This was not converted from a tricky angle. There was still ten minutes on the clock, with the scores standing now at 26-17. A Millburn try would bring them right back in it. A Tain try would be the nail in their coffin.

Millburn were now rattled, their once swift back play had become erratic and silly mistakes that come with forcing a game, had crept into their play. However, they had managed to break their way up into the Tain twenty-two and were looking dangerous. It is at this moment everything in the movies goes into slow motion. Out on the left hand side of the pitch Millburn had managed to create a three man overlap by sucking in the Tain defenders. They moved the ball out from the back of the ruck, from attackers' hands to attackers'

hands till all that stood in front of Tain's thin white try line was one, Sam Brennan himself a thin white line. Eyeball to eyeball he stood against his foe, who not having his eyes on the ball dropped it. At this point everything starts to speed up, as Millburn despaired, Sam reacted and pounced on the ball like a cheetah and started to run. How he ran metre after metre crossing half way then opposition 10, then 22 no one could catch him and they didn't. The icing was put on the cake as the try was converted by Gordie Mackay who put it over from wide out on the left of field. What a game, 31-17 to TRA! What an evening!

The next day the taste these young Spartans enjoyed was not last night's Burger King but the sweet taste of success. from one who was proud to be there.

A Ansbro

S2 HOCKEY SUCCESS

The S2 Ross Sutherland Hockey Tournament took place on 11th November. Five schools from around the area took part in an 8-a-side round robin contest. The TRA girls had played very well in the league and hoped to maintain this in the tournament.

The first game was against Dingwall and the girls got off to a storming start, with a 5-0 win. Jacqueline Greenlees and Georgia Dryburgh were brilliant upfront scoring some great goals. The next game against Golspie was more challenging but we still managed to win 2-0. Then it was a 3-0 win over Alness.

The real challenge came in the next game against Fortrose. The ball was constantly going from end to end as both teams battled to try and break through the defence. Anna-Mmay Dwyer with her strong tackling and hitting saved the day for TRA on several occasions and Jessica Fraser had to work hard in goals. After a nerve-racking fifteen minutes the score was 0-0 which meant the overall winner would be decided by the team scoring the most goals. Fortrose needed to win their final

game by 6 goals to beat Tain but only managed a 2-0 win.

The TRA team of Jessica Fraser, Anna-May Dwyer, Rachael Griffin, Sryn Jedan, Georgia Dryburgh, Iseabail Moffat, Marion Gordon, Aimee MacDonald, and Jacqueline Greenlees were a real credit to the school. Well done girls!



A Scott, PE Department

More hockey news over the page!

HOCKEY REPORT

It has been great to see so many girls coming along to training and playing in all our matches. We have now completed all the games in the Ross/Sutherland League and have had some very good results which are listed bellow. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Peter Whiteley for coaching the senior team and former pupil, Kayleigh Cattanach for taking the S3 team. Without their support it would have been impossible to have run all four teams. The team captains have also done a great job keeping players informed of team fixtures.

Results:

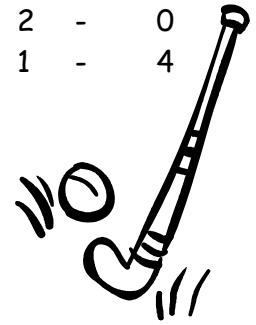
| | Tain v | Alness |
|-----|--------|--------|
| S1 | 1 - | 0 |
| S2 | 3 - | 0 |
| S3 | 2 - | 1 |
| Snr | 4 - | 0 |

| | Tain v | Dingwall |
|-----|--------|----------|
| S1 | 1 - | 0 |
| S2 | 3 - | 2 |
| S3 | 0 - | 4 |
| Snr | 0 - | 0 |

| | Tain v | Fortrose |
|-----|--------|----------|
| S1 | 1 - | 3 |
| S2 | 1 - | 2 |
| S3 | 2 - | 0 |
| Snr | 1 - | 4 |

| | Tain v | Golspie |
|-----|--------|---------|
| S1 | 0 - | 3 |
| S2 | 3 - | 2 |
| S3 | 1 - | 0 |
| Snr | 2 - | 0 |

| | Tain v | Invergordon |
|-----|--------|-------------|
| S1 | 0 - | 4 |
| S2 | 8 - | 0 |
| S3 | 4 - | 1 |
| Snr | 2 - | 1 |



This month the male staff in the school decided to put down their razors for one month (November) and help raise awareness and funds for men's health. Movember is about bringing the moustache back and having some fun for a very serious cause - prostate cancer. Now in its third year, we are looking forward to seeing Mo Bros & Sistas embrace the moustache to raise money for such a worthy cause. What many people don't appreciate is that one man dies every hour of prostate cancer in the UK, more than 35,000 men will be diagnosed this year and that prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. Facts like these have convinced the staff in the school that we should get involved and I am hoping that we will get a lot of support. If you would like to donate to the cause, "I am sure some of you got a laugh at parents evening", then you can go on to our web site and follow the instructions. <http://uk.movember.com/mospace/286158/>

Thank you to all the staff in the school for supporting such a worth cause.

T Magowan



Christmas Concert

Thursday 17 December 2009

7.30pm in the Assembly Hall,

Tain Royal Academy

All welcome



Tain and Easter Ross Ward Forum
Wednesday 9 December 2009
in the Milton Bowling Club, Milton
from 7.30pm to 9.30pm
(refreshments from 7pm)



Main Topic: Housing in the Highlands

Come and discuss what you think should be in the next Highland Housing strategy.

The Forum meets regularly and **members of the public are welcome to attend.**

There is a 20 minute public question and answer session at the end of the meeting.

If you have an enquiry about the Tain and Easter Ross Forum; would like to submit questions in advance of the meeting; or have any special requirements/needs to help you take part, please contact Carol Elliot at Tain Service Point or by phoning 01349 886643 or by emailing carol.elliott@highland.gov.uk.

Further information can also be found on the Highland Council website www.highland.gov.uk under "Your Ward".

FITNESS CLASSES

We now have some extra fitness classes running this term. For additional information please contact reception on 01862 893767.

Classes are:

| | | |
|------------------|---|----------------------|
| Monday | Third Age Keep Fit | 10.30-11.30am |
| | Cardio Cycle | 7.15-8.00pm |
| Tuesday | Cardio Cycle | 6.30-7.30pm |
| Wednesday | Aqua Aerobics | 7.00-7.45pm |
| Thursday | Cardio Cycle & Stretch | 10.00-11.00am |
| | (beginners & concession class) | |
| | Cardio Cycle | 6.30-7.30pm |
| | Body Tone | 7.30-8.30pm |
| Friday | Pilates | 10.00-11.00am |

EVENING CLASSES

Please contact reception to show your interest in evening classes.

TAIN AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB

Are you interested in Swimming, do you want to learn and train more? Contact a Supervisor at TRACC or the Swimming Club for more information.



AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

There are limited places available at After School Club. Please contact TRACC reception (01862 893767) for further information.

WELL DONE!

Well Done to Gordon Mackay and Darren Houlston who have just completed the UKCC Level 1



Swimming Teachers course and to Darren Oliver who has completed the BASC Snorkelling Qualification.



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

For the Christmas holidays TRACC will be closed from 24th December until 3rd January (inclusive).

GYM INSTRUCTION SCHEME

Do you need some guidance, direction or motivation in the fitness room, have you heard about our new Gym Instruction Scheme? It includes an initial consultation and goal setting session then looking at a programme to suit your needs.

Contact TRACC and ask to speak to our Gym Instructor, Kimberly McMenemy for further information.

Kelly Skinner, TRACC

TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL DURING ADVERSE WEATHER

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to decide if a pupil should attempt to travel to school, by transport or on foot, in adverse weather conditions. The Education Authority encourages full attendance at school but in severe weather conditions the safety of pupils is much more important. Parents and pupils are often concerned that important examinations may be missed, but this should not over-ride good judgement. Schools normally make alternative arrangements for missed examinations.

The school updates its procedures for adverse weather closure annually, therefore:-

- **parents** should advise schools of an alternative address, as close as possible to the school, which may be used by their children in emergencies.
- **the school** will advise parents of normal local arrangements for school transport and any special arrangements in the event of adverse weather.
- **details of the 0870 telephone information service are given at the bottom of this page.**
- You can also access the new Highland Council winter weather website at the following web address:
www.schoolclosures.highlandschools.org.uk

When weather conditions are poor:-

- **Local radio stations** issue news and weather bulletins on traffic conditions and school closures. Transmissions may not cover all households and may be subject to re-scheduling but should be helpful. Parents are advised to remain "tuned in" to ongoing road weather, or school information updates.

Broadcast times

BBC Radio Highland

6.55am - 7.00am 7.50pm - 8.00pm

12.55pm - 1.00pm 4.55pm - 5.00pm

In extreme conditions Radio Highland will interrupt Radio Scotland transmissions, usually on the hour, to carry emergency bulletins.

Moray Firth Radio

Normally hourly news bulletins and half-hourly summaries will carry local information on weather, roads and conditions affecting schools. In severe conditions normal programmes will be interrupted more frequently to carry emergency bulletins.

Please do not telephone local Radio for advice but listen to appropriate broadcasts.

For pupils using school transport

- Parents should advise their children on how long they should wait at the pick up point for their transport. This will depend on the prevailing weather conditions and the availability of shelter at the pick-up point. During adverse weather conditions no pupil is expected to wait longer than twenty minutes past the normal "pick-up" time.
- Parents should note differences between **contract** vehicles and **public service** vehicles. Drivers of **contract** vehicles are advised not to drop off children where there is any doubt that they may not safely reach home or other place of shelter. Drivers of **public service** vehicles must travel their normal routes and cannot make special provision for the individual pupils.
- Where parents are concerned about weather conditions at "drop-off" points, they should contact the school as early as possible.

When weather conditions are poor, parents should arrange to have children met at the "drop-off" point, especially where public service transport is used.



The number to call during adverse weather is 0870 054 6999
followed by TRA's pin number 04 1220

